

## Miscellany.

## THE SCULPTOR OF MODENA.

(CONCLUDED.)

"How now, monk, uttered the sculptor, somewhat petulently, "have you come to shrive me?"

Without answering this question, the unbidden presence threw back the cowl, and Zanello started on seeing the beautiful features of Marianna Torello.

"—sh!" uttered the maiden, holding up her white finger. "There may be danger at hand, so speak not too loudly."

"Blessed angel," murmured Zanello, moving and taking her hand, and pressing it to his lips.—"Has the duke let you come to—"

"The Duke would not have sent me in this guise," interrupted Marianna. "No, no! I have stolen my way here, and I have come to set you free."

"But surely the Duke will not pardon me?"

"No. You must escape. This garb will disguise you. The key of your door I will leave with you, and a trusty servant will be at the outer gate to let you forth. I have braved much to accomplish this, but at length I have succeeded.—Oh, Zanello, you may yet be saved."

The sculptor sat down upon his stool, and buried his face in his hands. For a long while he sat thus and then he arose and gazed upon the growing features of the Virgin.

"Marianna," he said at length, in a tone of sad sound, "I cannot go now. I must finish this work first. I must see it done."

"But that will be too late," urged the maiden.

"If you love life, save it now."

"Ah, Signora, life is not so sweet as it once was. You would not flee with me."

"Would you ask me to?"

"No, no. God forbid that I should see you in danger!"

"Then flee now, and when you find a safe home I will come to you."

"O God, what sweetness do you whisper in my ear. You will come to me, and be ever with me, and to bless and love me?"

"Yes, yes," whispered the maiden, bowing her head upon the bosom of her lover. "Only flee now, and when you are safe, I will come to you."

The young sculptor struggled hard with the spirit that was thus called up within him. But at length his face grew calm, and he drew the maiden more closely to his bosom.

"Marianna," he said, "three nights in succession have I dreamed a strange dream. I thought I was upon the scaffold, and the executioner was ready to do his bloody work. Suddenly there came an angelic presence and stayed the axe, and I was free. I kneeled down to thank my preserver, and I thought it was my own marble Virgin that received my thanks. Thrice has that dream come. O, I must finish my work. I must see that marble as it appeared to me in my dream, and then I will flee."

"Alas! that may be too late. Let me be your preserver."

"Do not tempt me. I would rather die than to give you pain, and I would rather die than to live to see my work unfinished. I will strain every nerve. If you can come to me in three days, I will have it done. The duke will yet wait five days for me. Come to me then, and I will flee.—any if you love me, let me do my work."

"If I did not love you I should not be here," rejoined the maiden, struggling to keep back the partings that swelled up from the fount of her deep feelings. "But I will try to be here in three days from now. Will you promise to flee then?"

"Yes, Marianna, I will promise you that."

"Then God save you till that time. I think I can come then."

For a moment longer those two bosoms beat together, and then Marianna Torello drew the dark cowl over her head, and glided away from the prison room.

With the sculptor, the hours of day light passed almost unheeded by. He worked upon his statue with unceasing diligence, and on the morning of the third day from the visit of Marianna, it was all but done save a few finishing strokes that were needed to give it the full blush of life. The hours passed on, and the marble began to throw off the

Wast vestiges of coldness, and assume warmer

An hour later, and the artist was startled by hearing heavy footsteps in the corridor outside his door. With a quick movement he drew the green screen over the statue. Hardly had he done this, when the door was opened, and the duke entered alone. Zanello was not prepared for this, but yet he met the noble signor calmly.

"Well, Zanello, I have come to see how you progress with your work. You have given up your task for to-day it seems."

"Yes, my lord. The light is failing me, and I am weary."

"But I will see how much you have accomplished."

"Not now, my lord. Come here at this hour tomorrow, and you shall see it."

"Yes, and I must see it now too. Be not too jealous of your art, Zanello, for you will not live long to profit by it. Remove the screen, and let me see how looks our marble Virgin."

Not now, my lord duke," persisted the sculptor, with considerable agitation. "Grant me until tomorrow. To-morrow at this hour you may see it, for then it shall be yours. It is mine now."

But the duke was not to be put off thus. He had come to see the statue, and he was not a man to be balked of his purpose.

"You must excuse me," he said, as he moved towards the statue.

Under other circumstances Zanello would have pushed the intruder back, but he dared not do it now. He only put forth his hand with a convulsive movement as he saw the duke pull the screen from the statue.

At this moment the door of the room was again opened, and the lady Marianna, disguised as before, entered. She closed the door carefully after her, and then for the first time she saw the duke.

"Aha! whom have we here?" uttered Antonio.

Zanello was upon the point of assuring the duke that it was only a monk that had come to shrive him, but the maiden exposed herself before he could speak. The sight of her guardian operated so powerfully upon her that she uttered a quick cry, and she trembled so violently that the cowl fell back from her face.

"Marianna!" uttered the duke, as he recognised the beautiful features of his ward. "Zanello, what means this? You have been deceiving me. This then, is the secret of thy soul, you shall die this very night!"

This startled the maiden back to her senses. She sprang forward, and kneeling at the feet of the duke she clasped her hands together.

"No, no! my good lord," she cried: "O, he is not to blame for this. It is I—I, who have done it all. Pardon, pardon, for Zanello!" Dark clouds swept across his face, and wild emotions raged in his bosom. He loved the gentle girl who knelt at his feet and he was more grieved than angry now that he found the sculptor likely to be innocent of the meeting.

"Marianna," he at length said, "why are you here?"

"To liberate Zanello."

"You love him then?"

"Yes."

The duke turned away and as he did so his eyes fell upon the marble features he had uncovered.—He started back as he saw them, and for the first time the sculptor seemed forgotten. It was a face of marvelous beauty that dwelt upon that marble statue, and the beauty was as strange as it was marvelous. It was a maternal beauty—a soft shining, heavenly countenance—full of soul and holy love. The hands were clasped upon the swelling bosom, and the eyes were turned towards heaven. The duke gazed and gazed, and he placed his hands upon his brow and then gazed again. All signs of the conflict were gone from his face, and in the stead thereof there was a radiant light breaking over his features. His own hands were slowly folded upon his bosom, even as were the marble hands upon which he gazed and his eyes gradually turned heavenward. At length he turned toward the sculptor,

"Zanello," he said in a hushed whisper, "your work is done."

"Yes my lord," returned the artist, strangely puzzled by the duke's manner.

Even Marianna had for the moment forgotten the startling scene that had just passed.

"Where is the model for that face?" asked Antonio in the same low whisper.

"In my own heart, most noble duke."

"But how came it there?"

"I have carried it there from earliest childhood. Pardon me, my lord, for it was sacrilege to put those features upon the Virgin Mother. A more lovely countenance never shown upon earth than the one I have imaged there."

"But who—who wore that countenance?"

"It was my mother."

The duke of Modena sunk down upon the sculptor's tool, and though he gazed still upon the statue yet it was evident that his thoughts were far away.

"Zanello," he said after a long silence "tell me more of this. Tell me what you know of that mother, for I, too, remember a face like that."

The sculptor was startled, for as he now gazed upon the duke's countenance a strange sensation came over him.

"My lord duke," he said, "I have a very simple tale to tell. The first that I remember of life was in Dalmatia. In a quiet cot upon the banks of the Cherby I lived all alone with my mother. She came from some place in Italy to escape religious persecution. My father was killed. I was her youngest child, and with me, then an infant, she fled. One other child a boy of twelve years, she left behind, for he was at Rome with an uncle, and she had to go without him. When I was 15 years old, my mother died. I saw her buried, and then I came to Italy to study. My mother advised me not to come hither, but I knew not why I should fear."

"And your mother's name?"

"I only knew that it was Lucretia. She would never tell me more, for she said my name would only be a curse to me."

"Alas, poor Lucretia!" murmured the duke as he bowed his head. "In one short month after she fled the proscription was taken from her house and she was sought for in vain.—Zanello, your father did die—he suffered under the ban of proscription, but his memory has been cleared from all stain."

"And you knew my mother?" said the sculptor tremblingly.

"Ay, Zanello, for she was my mother too! In my own prison have I found my brother!"

The duke stepped forward as he spoke, and placed his arms about the sculptor's neck.—Zanello would not have made the least demonstration, but now that he found his brother loved him, he gave his heart up to the emotions that had found a place in his soul. No doubt existed of the reality of what he had heard, for it all came in heavenly tones upon his ear.

Marianna realized the whole in a moment, and as she leaned up against the window-casing for support, her small white hands were clasped in hopeful prayer.

"O, how well do I remember those sainted features," murmured the duke, as he gazed upon the marble face, but with his hand still upon his brother's shoulder. "I can see my mother as I left her on the morning of my departure for Rome.—I kissed her when she blessed me, and how I kissed my infant brother that lay upon her bosom. I never saw her again, and my heart grew cold and severe. But it's warmer now, for I am not alone on earth. Our father, Zanello, was the lawful duke of Modena, and when I came of age I followed to the office. Come, come, this prison is no place for you."

"And you can save me?"

"Save you? Yes. The law cannot harm you now, for you are one of the noblest patricians in Modena. By my faith, that marble Virgin has a wondrous magic in it. It has saved your life, given you a noble station, and bestowed upon me a dearly loved brother."

"And has it done nothing for me?" whispered Marianna, moving to the duke's side and laying her hand upon his shoulder.

"For you, Marianna?"

"Ay, my good lord. You should not keep all the charm of the magic Virgin for yourself."

The maiden hung down her head as she ceased speaking, and Antonio felt a warm tear fall upon his hand.

"Ay, my sweet ward," uttered the duke, with a light smile, "I fear that your wickedness will triumph after all. You have trampled upon my authority—sought to throw off my protection—attempted to set my prison house at naught, and now you would have me be kind to you. I have a great notion to put you away from me; Zanello, will you take her?"

The duke pushed the maiden toward his brother, as he said this, and from the smile that dwelt upon his countenance, the lovers knew that there was no more barrier to their love. The sculptor caught Marianna to his bosom, and when she looked up through her happy tears she murmured:

"Ah, Zanello; your dream was true, after all."

There was wonder and excitement in Modena when it was known that the youngest son of the dead duke was returned to the home of his birth, and hundreds who came to gaze upon the marble Virgin, remembered well the loved features of the long lost duchess. Zanello found friends on all

hands, and even the relations of Julian Pazzi came to him and forgave him for they knew that their kinsman had been all to blame.

There was a marriage ceremony in the ducal palace, and when it was concluded, the duke kissed the blushing bride, and then turning to Zanello he said:

"Now signor sculptor, you have the truant in your keeping, and I advise you not to suffer her to show her face to any other artist for a model.—There's a witchery in the business."

"It's a marvelous pleasing witchery, at all events, returned Zanello, as he drew his beautiful bride more closely to his side, and looked lovingly into her radiant face."

Marianna only smiled in reply. She was too happy to speak.

The marble Virgin is still in Modena. It stands by itself in the chapel of the ducal palace, and the old Benedictine who attends there loves to point it out to visitors, and relate the strange circumstances connected with its history.

## How he got his Fingers bit.

Herr Alexander, the magician, was arrested on the 21 ult., at Rochester, and taken in irons to Lockport, on the instance of a man who was his bail two years ago in a case of damages, Alexander having failed to appear.

Finding the above item going the rounds of the press, and happening to know something about the case of damages above alluded to, perhaps we shall be pardoned, if we write a description of the laughable though unfortunate affair.

At an evening exhibition at Lockport, N. Y., some two years since, given by Herr Alexander, the magician, he proposed among other feats of legerdemain and wonder, that any person in the audience, should have the privilege of loading and firing the pistol at his head, in the presence of the audience, and he would catch between his front teeth, the identical ball used on the occasion.

As may well be supposed, an announcement of this kind, posted up in all public places, in an inland village like Lockport, set the whole town by the ears, and at an early hour the spacious Hall was crowded almost to suffocation, and among the number assembled, was a young man who considered that his eye teeth had been cut a little too long and a little too deep, to be done by a strolling magician. Rising from his seat therefore, when the performance had proceeded as far as the pistol act, he exclaimed—

"Just you hold on, my old covey, I wants to look at that shooting iron myself, afore its loaded."

"Oui, Monsieur," exclaimed the little Frenchman; "but 'tis all von—a—a—vot you call 'im de humbug, and I notis by your beautiful head and eyes, dat you eachy me in mine trick so I tink as better so I ave somebody else."

"No you don't replied the spirited young man: "I just want a pass at your head myself, and I'll blow your eyes where the crows can't find 'em; see if I don't. So pass along the pistol and let me load it."

As the young man and his friends insisted upon the magician's complying with the request, it being no more, as they said, than what was advertised on the bills, the audience realized a cold tremor as the pistol, powder and ball were handed to the young man to prepare for the expected tragedy, and as he was pouring in an uncommon large charge of powder, a friend at his side whispered in his ear—

"Don't for Heaven's sake fire the pistol at him loaded in that way, or you'll blow his head to pieces the first fire; then you'll have to answer for it by being strung up yourself."

"Never you mind about me," replied the excited marksman; "I've taken advice upon the subject and the law can't touch me, if I kill him on the spot. And I'm bound to do it, too, or lose a limb! I am or I wouldn't say so."

The little magician during this time, was nervously walking backward and forward, incoherently talking to himself and trying to explain to the young man how the pistol should be held, that it should not be injurious or dangerous to the person firing it.

"You moonst not take the pistol in both hands," exclaimed the nervous and solicitous magician; "if you take the pistol in both hands, you will hurt yourself. Take de pistol in one hand and hold it from toddler one so long as your arms, so! den if you kill me, you will make yourself no more."

"Don't you bother yourself how I hold the pistol," replied the young man; "I can blow yer head off half way across the room and hold the gun as I likes, so don't worry yourself about me, but jest step back to the stand and let me have a broadside at yer, and I'll give you a lesson that'll make you dance!"